

THE AUTHOR 2

OF

The Letter to the Duke of Grafton

VINDICATED

FROM THE

CHARGE OF DEMOCRACY.

68
WITH NOTES.

By Mr. MILES. (W.A.)

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THE AUTHOR.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

London, June 17, 1794.

IT has been insinuated that the principles of the author of the following pages are democratic; and the malicious interpretation which has lately been given to a word of considerable import to mankind, calls loudly on him to repel a slander as insolent as it is ill founded.

His principles are no farther democratic than the Laws and Constitution of **THIS** country allow, and which it would be as criminal in a British subject to renounce, as it would be dastardly in him to conceal. After this explanation, he trusts that he has nothing to apprehend from the insects of the day, who steer their consciences by the occasion, and who would sell, like Esau, their birth-right for a mess of porridge.

A VIN.

ADVERTISMENT.

London, June 1st 1840.

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A VIN.

VINDICATION,

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THE gentlemen who conduct the Monthly Review have so grossly misrepresented my motives and sentiments, that I feel myself under the necessity of explaining what I thought could not be easily mistaken, and what is still more painful, to vindicate that from blame which I expected would have met with praise, not censure. These gentlemen however, or their proxy, appear to have the cause of the French emigrants infinitely more at heart than the legality of the grant to the Duke of Grafton, or of the fair fame of his great grandmother. How far the pride of his Grace will be flattered by his having been made a kind of *avant courier* to a description of people so thoroughly despicable I know not, nor is it of importance either to my happiness or character to enquire.

It

It is asked with an air of triumph not altogether destitute of that "*self-sufficiency*" with which I have been reproached, "*who the hero is that presumes to impeach the PIETY of the French Clergy and the VALOR of the French Nobility?*" The answer is, that he is no hero, but a plain, unaffected man; very much attached to his country and to truth; independent of all parties; and almost as obscure and as insignificant as those who censure him.—That the French Clergy and the French Nobility, at least that class of them who prefer fraud to sincerity and despotism to slavery, and who alone have been alluded to, should find advocates in this country, where the value of good morals and of rational freedom are so highly rated and so perfectly understood, must be matter of surprize as well as of concern to those who respect the preservation of either, and who acknowledge that there are other duties annexed to religion besides fasting and praying.—Shall I tell these invisible champions of an itinerant Priesthood and Noblesse, who are dispersed like the Jews over the face of the earth, but without hopes of redemption or a Messiah to confide in, that their scandalous profligacy, insolence and vexations, provoked and justified the revolution of which they are the victims, and that it is owing to the intrigues, cabals, and falsehoods of those worst
of

of miscreants, that Europe is involved in a series of calamities, the issue of which it would puzzle prescience to foretell? The question is not whether the higher orders of the Clergy performed the pantomime of mass with all the decorum and solemnity due to the pretended divinity of its institution;—for their dexterity at assuming or throwing aside the masque of devotion will never be disputed by those who have resided in Catholic countries.—The question is, whether the lives of these ecclesiastics corresponded with their functions and were in conformity with the doctrines they preached.—Such is the question, and the answer to it may be found in every volume and almost in every page of history, from the days of Constantine to the present time. Every gentleman who has resided either in Italy or France, or who has been in any of the ecclesiastical States of the Empire, must have seen instances in abundance where precept and example were constantly at variance, and where the opposite characters of saint and of sinner were exhibited in the same person with an effrontery as offensive to decency as it is injurious to morals*.

* Whenever I see a Catholic priest, the idea of a poacher instantly occurs to my mind, *ce sont des Braconniers qui s'amusent sur la chasse des autres*—enjoined to chastity, and forbidden

The necessity of a pretended conformity to the restraints which the Roman Catholic faith imposes on those who profess it, tends to make men hypocrites.—It gives them the exterior of virtue with all the essentials of vice, and destroys that open, generous frankness which is at once the source and protection of probity; it impels mankind to have recourse to dissimulation, and renders them dark, undermining and treacherous; it teaches them how to violate the most solemn engagements with impunity,

bidden to marry; the severity of the law may be offered in extenuation of its infringement, and I am willing to admit the plea, but do not let these men affect a sanctity of manners which does not belong to them, or exercise a despotism as impudent as it is iniquitous. I was at Spa some years since, when an indigent publican was prosecuted by one of these *tartuffes* (a member of the Synod) for having suffered mutton chops to be dressed for some Protestant guests on a day of abstinence. The disorders to which I allude prevail more in the ecclesiastical States than in any other, for the government being entirely in the hands of the Clergy, they have no account to render; while a complaisant laity, in return for the good things they receive, connive at the enormities, and participate in the crimes of a dissolute priesthood. Bad example disseminated in this manner, and communicated to the inferior classes by the highest, cannot fail to infect and finally to corrupt the entire mass. Vice must, under such circumstances, take strong root, and acquire a force and consistency in the minds of men, which will eventually mock all precept, and on some occasions set even the laws at defiance.

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and when they accustom themselves to dispense with their obligations in one instance, their observance of them in every other will depend not so much upon a sense of duty as on their interests, their passions and convenience—a religion that pretends to a purity of morals incompatible with human nature, and that is beyond the utmost efforts of self-denial to acquire, is subversive of all virtue. Instead of rendering its ministers chaste, pious, and modest, by the vows it exacts, the ceremonies it imposes, and the humility it enjoins, it renders them debauched, arrogant, and cruel *.

All

* It is very common in Roman Catholic countries to see divisions of the most lamentable kind excited in private families by the criminal intrigues of priests—the influence and authority they derive from auricular confession, and the sanctity attached to the sacerdotal character, joined to a vicious and corrupt education are the causes of infinite disorders, while the difficulty of punishing the offender, and the care which is taken to accelerate the escape of delinquents under the pretence of preserving the church from scandal, amount to impunity, and render them as little solicitous to conceal their guilt and irregularities as they are scrupulous in committing them. I have known husbands separated from their wives, or compelled to connive at their dishonor—I have seen children proscribed by their parents, and sons and daughters, infants and adults, disinherited by their mothers at the instigation of monks and confessors, in whose favour the patrimony has been bequeathed by their credulous and

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deluded

All restraints that are useless and unnatural are not only impolitic but dangerous to society. Amongst the most mischievous of those which Rome has imposed may be reckoned the law which prohibits that endearing and consolatory intercourse between the sexes, which renders life, if not desirable, at least supportable. To deprive mankind of this source of enjoyment, of this best and greatest solace, is to give Heaven the lie, and to inflict punishment where crime has not been committed; it is contrary to the Scriptures which those profess to believe who exact it, and who, under an affected sanctity of manners, are guilty of the most dissolute licentiousness. It is in fact an oppression as wanton as it is repugnant to common sense and hostile to good order, and if rigorously enforced would provoke resistance, and purge the church that exercises it of much filth and dishonor; but the difficulty, not to say impossibility of submitting to restrictions so unnatural, makes all connive at dispensing with them, while religion, absurd, and tyrannical in one instance, wilfully connives at perjury in the second, rather than abolish an ordinance to

deluded penitents. If it should be said that religion does not enjoin such crimes, I answer that it authorizes them by conniving at them.

which

which no obedience is paid, and which tends to habituate the mind of man to the practice of every species of fraud, cunning, and injustice*.

The

* Both nuns and monks take a vow of chastity, poverty, and obedience; and that some idea of the *fidelity* with which they are observed may be formed, I transcribe the laconic oration of an ancestor of the late Duke of Orleans, (the famous Regent of France) to his natural daughter, whom he made an Abbess—"Vous allez faire vœu de pauvreté, d'obéissance & de chastité; pour observer la première, je vous donne cent mille ecus de rente; pour exercer l'obéissance, vous aurez deux à trois cents religieuses à commander, & pour la chastité vous vous en tirerez comme vous pourrez à l'exemple des Evêques."—*You are going to take a vow of poverty, of submission, and of chastity; and to enable you to perform the first, I give you an income of twelve thousand five hundred pounds a year; that you may practise the second, I invest you with an authority over two or three hundred nuns; and as to the third, you will no doubt manage as well as you can, and follow the example of the Bishops.*—The example of the Bishops in those days, and which has been observed most religiously ever since, was always to have a niece or two on their establishment. An Archbishop whom I saw at Paris had no less than three; whether this was a compliment to his vigor, or meant to mark his pre-eminence in the church, or whether these damsels were bequeathed to him as legacies *in trust* by some of his fugitive brethren when the drones were driven out of the hive, I cannot take upon me to ascertain; all that I pretend to infer from the fact is, the very great respect which these pious and exemplary gentlemen pay to decorum, by giving the ladies a degree of consanguinity which preserves them from scandal, and precludes every idea of a criminal

The first and most essential requisite of religion is its truth or authenticity ; the second, its simplicity ; and the third, the purity of its pastors.—Where these are wanting, and it is attempted to supply the deficiencies by a multitude of gaudy and expensive ceremonies, some

intercourse between them and their right reverend *uncles*. Whether the Abbesses and the Prebends on the continent provide themselves with male relations of the *same degree*, I know not, but this I know, that the facility with which the vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience are taken, equal the effrontery with which they are violated. It has fallen more than once in my way to have been a spectator of the extreme licentiousness in which the religious of both sexes indulge, especially those of the order of St. Benedict and St. Bernard* ; and as the enormities which I have censured, naturally flow from the impracticable restraints which this disgusting superstition, for it cannot be called religion, made up of fraud, violence and shew, exacts from those who profess it ; and as no good can possibly result from a source so poisonous that it infects whatever it touches, its dissolution and final destruction are rather to be desired than regretted.

* It is no secret that in the convent of St. Claude at Dole, in Franche Comté, two subterraneous rooms were discovered which had evidently been used to bury alive the victims of monkish barbarity. The skeleton of a man was found in one of them, and in the other, those of a woman and an infant—*Vade in Pace* is the name by which these caverns of death are known in Catholic countries, and if they are less resorted to in these days than they were in the earlier ages of the Church, it is not because the Monks are more continent or humane, but that the times require less caution and reserve.

of

of them frivolous, others laughable, and all of them useless; where more importance is attached to the nonsense of forms and vain parade, than to the practice of virtue; and where faith counts for every thing, and morals go for nothing, it is neither illiberal nor unjust to assert, that such religion is evidently founded in falsehood, and justifies expulsion by its own maxims.

I will appeal to any dispassionate man, conversant with human nature, and informed of the conditions annexed to the Romish sacerdoce, whether those conditions do not necessarily tend to engender crimes and irregularities of every description in the priesthood, and to counteract those maxims which it is no less incumbent on them to enforce by example than it is their duty to inculcate by precept?—It is fair to enquire in my turn, since questions have been forced upon me with so much heat and injustice, whether the clergy of that community who violate their vow of chastity, are not virtually guilty of perjury, and if they are, how many of them can vouch for their innocence?

Let the Catholic Bishops come forward if they dare, and say that none of their body are indebted to the intrigues of dignified prostitutes for the mitres they obtained—Let them declare
if

if they can, that none of them lived publicly with women of profligate manners, or passed their lives in the excesses of the table *, or the lascivious embraces of distempered courtezans—Let the Abbé of St. Farr, who finds this country so hospitable, so pleasant, and indulgent to that class of his countrymen who are the least entitled to either—Let the gay and voluptuous Abbé Maury, who divides his time so happily between Rome and Loretto, that is between devotion and gallantry, or the disconsolate Bishop of Autun †, an outcast on the distant

* “ La fonction la plus pénible de l’épiscopat est la digestion.”—*A Catholic Bishop has no duty so painful to perform as his digestion.*—This is a proverbial saying throughout France, and proverbs, it is well known, are founded in truth and observation, at least all those that I have met with from the days of Solomon to those of Sancho Panca.

† It is not meant to vindicate the Bishop of Autun from the censure to which his profligate manners have exposed him—He does not deserve it—But from the acrimony with which those censures have been repeatedly urged, one would suppose that he was an extraordinary instance of ecclesiastical depravity. If, however, it should appear that the excesses of those who have adhered to the ancient government, and towards whose vices such a complaisant silence has been observed, were to the full as notorious, and no less reprehensible than those of this degraded prelate, it is fair to conclude that the politician has been PUNISHED in the priest, and that if the Bishop of Autun had not engaged in the revolution, his

tant shores of America, bewailing the sad destiny of his country, declare whether the picture I have drawn is or is not a faithful copy of the original? However liable the evidence of these men may be to suspicion, their capacity to decide cannot be questioned; and with the facts in my possession, and the broad page of history in

his irregularities would have met with the same indulgence as those of his no less atrocious brethren, who *pretend* to have sacrificed their *interest* to their CONSCIENCE!—Impudent hypocrites!—They have made no sacrifice—not a man of them would have abandoned his country, if the Revolution had assured to them their power—their incomes and their pleasures!—These are the losses they deplore—These the calamities they lament, not the destruction of those altars which they insulted and profaned by their dissembled piety!

Having cited an instance of the dissolute morals of the French Clergy, in the example of one who was engaged in the Revolution—I owe it to that justice which I love and practise, to produce an instance of similar depravity in one whose loyalty has exhausted panegyric, and who opposed most strenuously, and, I will answer for it, most cordially, all kind of reform, both in Church and State. The man to whom I allude is the Abbé Maury, and who, from the honors and emoluments which the Pope has lately bestowed upon him, the world might be led to conclude had lived in strict conformity with the duties of his profession and the doctrines he preached, yet, notwithstanding this reasonable expectation, it would be difficult to produce from the Conclave itself, or even from the history of the Popes, an instance of
greater

in view, I will venture to challenge their testimony on any ground where the inquisition is not established, and what is more, I will abide by it.

That

greater libertinism. Why this officious and turbulent priest, distinguished for his impudence and his profligacy, should have been complimented with a mitre and a red hat, can be no otherwise accounted for than by the part which he took AGAINST the Revolution; from which it is evident that the zeal with which he defended the cause of despotism and of superstition (for they are generally united) was of more value to him than if he had possessed all the piety and all the goodness of all the Saints in the Roman calendar; and here we find that the politician has been RECOMPENSED in the priest.—How far religion may be ultimately benefited by a policy so contrary to the received opinions of mankind respecting the distribution of rewards and punishments, or how far his Holiness may be justified by the canon law, in disposing of the rich benefices and distinctions of the Church to a character so completely infamous, is not within my province to decide; but according to the principles in which I have been educated, and to my conceptions of right, religion has been dishonored and burlesqued by the advancement of such a man to the purple.

I have selected the following fact from many others, equally well known, in confirmation of what I have advanced relative to this successful adventurer. I give it in the words in which it was transmitted to me by a person resident in Paris at the time. I have suppressed the name of the Lady in consideration of that respect which is due to her rank and sex; if the truth of the anecdote should be questioned, I

appeal

That some of the Bishops have been selected from the humble walks in life, and that they were exemplary in their manners, I am ready to admit; but the instances have been so few, that whenever they occurred the unfortunate prelates became objects of ridicule * to the rest of

appeal to her uncle, who I believe is in this country, for its veracity.

“ Toute la France connaît l’anecdote de l’Abbé Maury avec
 “ Mad. de F——. Ce galant prédicateur du Roi entra un jour
 “ armé d’un pistolet, dans la chambre à coucher de cette dame
 “ qu’il trouva au lit—ne pouvant parvenir à ses fins par son élo-
 “ quence il voulut employer la violence.—La dame feignoit de ce-
 “ der—L’Abbé plaça son pistolet au près du lit—La dame s’en
 “ faisa; sonna ses gens et fit reconduire le galant—il fallut ensuite
 “ la protection du Chancelier Lamoignon, pour qui l’Abbe faisait
 “ les preambules de ses edits, pour le sauver d’une procédure cri-
 “ minelle.”

Perhaps one of the reasons which induced the Pope to make the Abbe a Cardinal, was to console him for the disappointment occasioned by the resistance of the lady.

* If my memory is correct, it was in the year 1785, that the Abbé Beauvais, Bishop of Senes, preaching to the assembled Clergy at Paris, exhorted them to be exemplary in their morals and economical in their expences.

The advice was certainly good, and not inapplicable to the parties; but as it came from a man of low birth, in whom the *right* of admonishing those of superior rank was denied, and the *exercise* of it considered impertinent, the gentlemen in lawn sleeves exclaimed, “ *Voilà, ce que c’est que d’admettre*

of the order, and neither obtained credit nor respect for the purity they professed and practised. If

*des manans dans l'Episcopat **." The consequence was that the Abbé, compelled by the ill treatment he received from his brethren, resigned the bishoprick in a short time, and retired.

Such are the men whom the Monthly Reviewers, or their officious proxy, have the effrontery to call "victims of principle;" and is it for having exposed these reverend mountebanks to the scorn they merit, that I am accused of having libelled my country? Is it because I have stated those facts which history, if it performs its duty, must hereafter record and detail much more fully, that I am accused of having placed "*the French Clergy and Nobility in a new point of view.*" It may be new to those who are unacquainted with their character; but whether it be new or old, they have placed themselves in it, and I have done nothing more than POINT THEM OUT. As to the Nobility of France, what can be said more severe against them than that they abandoned their country, their Sovereign, their wives and their children, on the first appearance of tumult?—Was it cowardice or a love of tyranny that urged them to fly from what their interest, their duty, and their honor, should have stimulated them to defend to the last moment of their existence?—If it was the former, they may be objects of pity, for cowardice is an infirmity for which mankind are no more responsible than they are for their complexions; but if it proceeded from the latter, they deserve the destiny that has befallen them. If the hapless Monarch had effected his escape, the men who accompanied him into exile might

* *This is the consequence of making clowns Bishops.*

If the Catholic religion has fallen into contempt, it is not to be attributed to the loose and
diffolute

have pleaded in excuse for deserting their country an affection for their Sovereign.—I am no stranger to the force of personal attachments, and when they are shewn to an unfortunate, or even to a degraded Prince;—when they blaze with more ardor in his distress, than they did in his prosperity, they are arguments of virtue, and I honor the man who has the dignity and fortitude to sacrifice his interests to his affections. But these men, these red hot royalists from France, who only love a Court for its sunshine, and while they can bask in it like swine, or strut about in it like bantams;—whose reverence to the Prince is obsequiousness, and who while boasting of their high birth, are content to wait like lacquies, in the anti-chamber of men of the lowest birth, soliciting a miserable portion of that power which is either felt or exercised in one shape or another by every individual in a despotic Government, what claim to compassion or respect can they urge?—The men whom I have branded with contributing, by their flight as well as by their profligacy, to the ruin of their country, fled as soon as they heard the crash and beheld the ruins of the Bastille; their consciences were awakened by its fall to a sense of guilt, and foreseeing in its destruction, the extinction of that factitious greatness so dear to little minds, they had not the virtue either to make a struggle for what they loved so much, or to rally round the Throne in support of the Prince whose fate they pretend to lament. Previous to the Revolution, they preached resumptions of church lands, and would have sacrificed the Clergy to their avarice, their pride, and their hatred of religion, they now court the priesthood, and affect to make a common cause with them, in the vain hope that the

diffolute philosophy of the times, but to the scandalous profligacy of its Clergy, whose irregularities, and impostures, craft, insolence, and extortions,

latter yet retain some influence over the minds of the people, and that fanaticism will restore to both Priests and Nobles what they have lost by their profligacy and cowardice. If their morals had been pure and incorrupt, if they had practised the duties which men living in society owe to each other, the Revolution would not have been necessary, and when it took place, they might have stopped its career and prevented its excesses, by uniting and forming a phalanx capable of resisting the torrent and allaying the ferment; but their property, so necessary to their comfortable existence, and their titles and distinctions, so flattering to their vanity and pride, were sacrificed, with other obligations much more important, to their personal safety, and they fled from their country with a precipitancy as disgraceful to the character of those "*who were not afraid to face the bold legions of Britain*," as it has been ruinous to their fortunes and calamitous to all Europe; for it is owing to the intrigues, falsehoods, and misrepresentations of those men distinguished in their youth (according to the Monthly Reviewers) "*for levity, dissipation, frivolity, and even for a laxity of morals*," and which habits, by the bye, remain with them in spite of age, poverty and contempt—that a considerable part of the continent at this moment is a scene of blood, and exposed to horrors of much greater magnitude than even those which it has already experienced. These men, whom it is pretended "*have led from generation to generation the armies of France to battle*," fled however from a contest, in which interests infinitely dearer to them and to their country were at stake, than when they "*ceded the hard fought field to British valor*." The men, who were not afraid

extortions, have provoked disquisitions which have affected more or less the credit of all religions, and endangered their establishments.

If

to face the "*bold legions of Britain*," were however panic struck at an unarmed and undisciplined peasantry, they were terrified at imaginary and embryo conspiracies, which prudence might have dissipated, and courage defeated. But their vanity stood bawd to both, and rather than relinquish an iota of their privileges, exemptions and arrogance, they accelerated a civil war, and involved other nations in a quarrel, the sad effects of which will be long felt by posterity.

What an edifying, what a glorious and animating contrast does the Nobility and Clergy of Great-Britain exhibit to those of France! The latter, distinguished for their learning beyond those of all other nations, and no less esteemed for their piety and decorum of manners, ensure that respect to religion without which it is impossible it can exist. Contrast the mean and contemptible conduct of the French with that of the Nobility in this country, the only men upon earth perhaps who, taken collectively, deserve the honorable distinction of Noble, and what a wonderful difference appears!—Conspiracies have been formed in this country to subvert its Government, and destroy the Throne; but instead of abandoning either to the mercy of the conspirators; instead of betraying either fear or mistrust of the peasantry and yeomanry, to whom many of them are united by the triple ties of friendship, neighbourhood, and consanguinity they have, by rallying round the Throne and Constitution, formed a rampart which their patriotism, vigilance, and courage, will render impenetrable to those who would scale or destroy it.

If the French Nobility had done as much—if they had stood by their acres, and surrounded the King, instead of
abandoning

If the church of Rome, while professing greater purity, had not shewn itself more corrupt and depraved in practice than any other; if it had not blended every species of trick, falsehood, and buffoonery, with the awful solemnities of devotion, and declared hostilities against all other forms of worship; if to maintain its intolerant principles, it had not dispersed its sanguinary proscriptions over the habitable globe, pronouncing damnation * against all those

abandoning the one, and leaving the other an insulated cypher in his dominions, they would have had no occasion to stimulate Europe to arms, not for the purpose that they pretend of restoring religion, or monarchy, or peace, to their desolated and distracted country, but to recover their mistresses, their gew-gaws, and their cordons bleu †.

† In the commencement of the war there was nothing more common than to hear these gentlemen anticipating their return to France in full possession of their power, and boasting of the manner in which they would punish their tenants; and in these empty menaces, their vacant and depraved minds found consolation for the disgrace, poverty, and obscurity to which they are reduced.

* It is one of the tenets of the religion of Rome, that "*there is no salvation out of that Church*;" and this doctrine, as cruel as it is impious when addressed to those of weak minds, for the purpose of making proselytes, is frequently urged with extreme zeal, and sometimes with much rancor and severity to Protestant children, in convents and colleges for education; they are told that their parents being heretics will

those without its pale, and exercising a brutal and wanton despotism over the minds of all those within it, there is little doubt but it would have stood to the last moment of recorded time, and have been, what religion ought ever to be, a source of much future hope and present comfort to mankind. But its vices have worked its destruction; and it is not a random conjecture to say, that if its pastors in France had observed that simplicity of manners which belongs exclusively to minds that are ingenuous and incorrupt, the laity would have followed the example, and the nation have been preserved from all the terrible calamities which a contrary conduct has entailed on it.

A simplicity of manners is only to be maintained by examples, and these examples must proceed from those in elevated stations.

There is not in all history, either ancient or modern, that I have read, even one instance of

will inevitably be damned. Their infant minds being worked upon in this manner, have been converted, under the blasphemous pretext, that it is better to renounce their father and mother than God; while the pious hypocrite consoles himself for this flagrant breach of the greatest trust that can be reposed in him, with the reflection of having added an unimportant unit to his little community.

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a change being accomplished in the morals and manners of a country by the example of the meaner citizens—their corruptions prefer obscurity to the glare of day, and are easily suppressed, for they never ascend ; but whenever the higher orders are weak and base enough to set the example of vice, the contagion becomes general, and spreads itself with wonderful force and rapidity : This truth, so evident to whoever reflects, and so woefully confirmed by the revolution in France, should serve as a lesson to those who are entrusted with the administration of public affairs, and convince them that the best and most durable support of government is the preservation of morals*.

* It is misrepresentation, and in one sense iniquitous, to brand the year 1789 with the vices of the subsequent years. Let the most virtuous or the most vicious, the most affluent or the most indigent of those who took a decided part on the former epoch, declare whether they would not have preferred the ancient order of things to the anarchy that unhappily prevails at present, and if they answer in the affirmative, it is fair to conclude, that with all their zeal for liberty, they would have relinquished its inestimable blessings, rather than have obtained them at the terrible expence of so much public and private ruin.

MONTHLY REVIEW.

Art. 17. *A Letter to the Duke of Grafton, with Notes.* To which is annexed a Complete Exculpation of M. de la Fayette from the Charges indecently urged against him by Mr. Burke in the House of Commons on the 17th of March 1794. 8vo. 2s. 6d. Owen.

In our opinion, the author of this letter, which, if we rightly recollect, was first inserted in the morning paper entitled *The True Briton*, has either mistaken, or over-rated his talents. It seems as if he thought to acquire reputation from an attack on a character that had attracted the notice of the celebrated Junius:—but what a difference between the assailants! The one, even in the heat of his indignation against the minister, did not for a moment lose sight of the respect which he owed to himself as a gentleman, and to the public at whose bar he was arraigning the accused. He conducted the proceedings with decorum; and his language was suited to the dignity of the tribunal which was to try the cause, and to the importance of the cause itself. His satire, sharpened by wit, and enforced by eloquence, was of the finest temper and of the keenest edge; it cut, but did not mangle; it pared to the quick, but did not butcher; in a word, “it spoke daggers, but used none.”

The author of this pamphlet, though seemingly anxious to tread in the footsteps of so great a predecessor, soon loses sight of the language and sentiment of Junius, and

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speaks

speaks as if he meant to form his style on the model of Shakespeare's knight, whose great *forte* lay in saying the coarsest things in the coarsest way, and who was famous for that fruitful ingenuity which teemed with such a variety of abusive expressions, as confounded and struck dumb the persons against whom they were vented. The satire of the present writer resembles a bludgeon; and he appears as expert in brandishing it, as any of the gentlemen usually employed at elections to lay about them with that courtly weapon. If the use of hard names, and of harsh epithets, can give excellence to an author, this production might be accounted truly excellent.— When a man is charged with any delinquency, what a lack of proof must there be, when the accuser is obliged to ransack the ashes of the dead, and to draw from the tomb of oblivion the character of an ancestor, for the purpose of putting to shame her *great great* grandson! That man must surely have few personal faults, against whom it is thus thought necessary to array those of his relations long since reposing in the grave.

In proceeding thus against the Duke of Grafton, it is evident that our author is putting Charles II. and the Duchess of Cleveland on their trial, instead of arraigning their descendant; for what have the vices of the two former to do with the conduct of his Grace during the present session of Parliament? Does the author mean to say that the part which the Duke of Grafton has taken with respect to the existing war, [and which appears to be the foundation of this invective performance,] was wrong, because his great great-grandmother bore several children to King Charles II. without having been his wife? If he does not mean this, his allusion to the Duke's descent serves

serves only to display his illiberality, which must recoil on himself.—To shew that we are not unjust in this judgment, we extract the following passage:

“ Have a care, my Lord, the game you propose to play is deeper than you suspect. The people are not uninformed of the foul and polluted source from whence you derive your rank and income. They are not to be told, that with one or two exceptions, your pedigree can claim more infamy, and less antiquity, than that of any other peer in parliament, and, surely, under such circumstances, and under such an accumulation of hereditary and acquired odium, it ill becomes you to remind us of the impudent violation of the laws, by which your ancestor was advanced to honour and independence.”

Immediately following this paragraph, is a menace which, though thrown out against the Duke of Grafton, might alarm every man of property in the kingdom: “ Be advised, my Lord (says the author) and do not add to the ill humour that prevails, lest it should extend to promote an enquiry that may terminate in depriving you of what, (by an unwarrantable and scandalous abuse of power) has been settled on your family, and force you to observe that œconomy from necessity, which you have latterly practised from choice.” This menace is founded on a principle that would shake to its foundation all the freehold, and perhaps all the funded, property of the kingdom. The wisdom of every legislature on earth has found it necessary, in order to quiet the minds of men, to fix a period beyond which an inquiry shall not be instituted, as to by what other title

than possession an estate is holden. In this country, a title originally bad is made good, if the land, tenable under it, has been in the peaceable possession of an individual, or of those from whom he derives, for the space of sixty years. Such a possession becomes in itself a title which nothing can shake, until law be driven from the judgment seat, and oppression be let loose on society in the name of public justice, and in the form of *resumptions*. The Duke of Grafton's tenure is by a grant from the crown under the great seal; if there were any defect in the grant from want of legal power in the crown to make it, it has been supplied or cured by an act of parliament; and, superadded to that, his Grace can plead the prescription of possession for sixty years, which would bar a *writ of right*,—the highest writ known to the law of England.—If all this should not be able to bear an enquiry into the Duke of Grafton's title, what could prevent this inquiry from extending to all the grants made by the crown for centuries past? At the time of the reformation, the abbey lands, equal in extent to a fifth part of all England, were by act of parliament vested in the crown for the *public* use. In a very short space of time, they were nearly all granted away to court favourites. On what principle should these grants be viewed as sacred, while those made to the Duke of Grafton's ancestors should be resumed? They stand on the same foundation: he who attacks one of them attacks all; and the man who even hints at a resumption of any of them must, one would almost think, have made up his mind to a civil war.

The author appears to be aware of the alarming extent to which his principle of inquiry might lead; and
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he endeavours to draw out the sting, by making a distinction between what he calls the fruits of honest industry, and the dilapidation of the public revenue. Notwithstanding this distinction, the sting yet remains. Parliament, in providing for the public service, may grant a revenue arising from lands, rents, rent charges, or duties on imported articles: the accumulated mass belongs to the public, and its destination is for public uses. The alienation of any part of it, whether of custom-house duties, rents, or lands out of which they arise, is equally a diversion of the money from the end for which it was granted; and therefore no difference whatever, in point of principle, can be found between the grants of Charles II. to his natural children, and those made by Henry VIII. to his favourites; of the abbey lands which were vested in the crown for the specific purpose of defraying the expences of the state, and in consequence of a promise that the king, being thus enriched, would apply no more to his people for subsidies. The titles, by which the original grantees held, might have been in their nature unjust, and, in equity at least, might be deemed invalid: but they have all been since clothed with every sanction that parliament or prescription can give; they are therefore *now* as sacred as any in the kingdom; and he must be poor calculator indeed, who, setting aside all consideration of the blood which *must* infallibly be shed in an attempt to enforce a general resumption of grants of this nature, cannot discover that the measure would cause infinitely more money to be expended than it ever could bring into the exchequer:—but, supposing the principle of resumption to be just, is it reducible to practice? Should a man, with the fruits of his honest industry, have made purchase of a grant, which, however invalid

valid in its origin, had afterward received the sanction of the whole legislature ; would our author in that case, under the pretence that he had purchased a bad title, take from him what his honest earnings had enabled him to buy ? The possession of such grants procured, no doubt, advantageous matches for the grantees : would it be just to rob the posterity of innocent men of their settlements, who gave their daughters in marriage, and with them large fortunes, in consideration of the estates which these grantees then appeared legally to possess ? This was the case with the Earl of Arlington ; who, finding that Charles II, had made an ample provision for his son, the first Duke of Grafton, gave him in marriage the Lady Elisabeth Bennet, his only child, and with her all his estates. Would it be equitable to take from that Earl's heir, the present Duke of Grafton, the beneficial grant from the crown, which was, we may presume, no small inducement to Lord Arlington to consent to receive the first Duke of that name for his son in law ?

Inquiries into the mode by which estates were acquired, being once set on foot, would certainly not be confined to lands ; they would soon be extended to acquisitions made by contractors, public officers, and persons who had advanced money to government by way of loan, on terms advantageous to themselves, but which the inquirers would call rapacious and usurious ; they might insist that navy and ordnance bills should be discharged at the price given for them by the last purchaser, when the discount was the highest ; and they might vote it to be no breach of public faith to resolve that, on repayment of the price which any stockholder actually gave for
stock

stock, his claim to be paid off at *par* should be extinguished.

Such are the lengths to which, we think, the author's principle of inquiry might be carried; we therefore considered it to be in the highest degree dangerous to the peace of society; and we hope that our readers will not think we have taken up too much of their time in animadverting on a passage in which we discovered the seeds of inexpressible calamities to our country.

The French clergy and nobility he places in a new point of view; the former he calls "an itinerant dissolute priesthood," and, in common with the clergy of other national churches of the same communion, "vile and contemptible:"—the latter he represents as "men who deserted their acres on the first alarm," "a cowardly race of miscreants, the stoutest of whom would tremble to encounter, and shrink into nothing at the sight of, M. de la Fayette;"—and both together he honours with the appellation of "a beggarly crew of bishops and nobles." Who is it that thus brands with the epithets "vile and contemptible" a body of men who possessed a great portion of the light and abilities of one of the most enlightened nations on earth: men distinguished by birth, dignities, and education? Who is he who thus libels his own country for having received, cherished, and fed as victims of principle, (whether well or ill founded is not the question), a set of unfortunate men in whom it had not penetration enough to discover that there was nothing but what was vile and contemptible? Who is this mighty hero that sees nothing in those who, from generation to generation, have led
the

the armies of France to battle, but a *cowardly* race of miscreants? Who is he who blasts the reputation of *Britons*, by saying that those French nobles, to whom they have sometimes been obliged to cede the hard fought field, and who of course were not afraid to look the bold legions of Britain in the face, were a set of poltroons, the stoutest of whom would shrink into nothing at the sight of one of their own body? Is it because they are cowards that England boasts that she has sometimes defeated them, or that she is now putting arms into their hands?—The nobles of France have frequently been described as men of levity and dissipation, remarkable in their youthful days for frivolity, and often for laxity of morals: but we never heard of that man who thought it *prudent*, unmasked, and in the face of day, to call in question their *courage*, much less to brand them with the name of *cowards*. We can say, from our own knowledge, that there are many of that body now in England, who, so far from rejoicing in the imprisonment of M. de la Fayette, (which, by the bye, might well be a source of joy to men who would tremble at the sight of him,) lament it most sincerely;—not because they think him an injured man, but because his confinement deprives them of an opportunity of calling him to account for what *they deem* his treachery to the best of sovereigns.—We pretend not to say that they are right in charging him with having betrayed the king; nay we even think that our author exculpates him, fairly, from the charge: all that we mean is that, so far from trembling at the idea of meeting him, there are many of them who would travel over half the globe, to have the pleasure of telling him to his beard what they think of his conduct:—but whatever cause these gentlemen may have for being offended

fended with M. de la Fayette, the King of Prussia can have no right, founded either in the laws of war or of nations, for the treatment which he has made his prisoner experience since his captivity.

We here close our review of a work which, if it were not by its author brought in competition with the Letters of Junius, might in point of energetic diction be entitled to some praise,—but which the self-sufficiency and illiberality that run through it will not suffer us to pass over without censure, notwithstanding the abilities of the writer.”

There is nothing more common than for men to mistake or over-rate their talents. The error is universal; and descending through the voluminous gradations of civilized life, it infects the general mass, and marks with more or less distinction all ranks and descriptions of people. It is the natural result of that egotism which every man possesses in a greater or lesser degree, however artfully he may conceal it; and the instances in which it occurs are so frequent, and at the same time so very unimportant, that they scarce deserve notice or rebuke. Considering this propensity as a foible incident to humanity, I should think very ill indeed of the urbanity or capacity of the man, who would treat it as a vice, and punish it with all the severity due to crime; for offensive as it may appear, when

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contrasted

contrasted with the unaffected modesty of those who are less assuming, it is but a folly, and a folly of such little consequence to the community, and so little likely to affect the general interests of society, that it more frequently provokes laughter than reprehension, and is seldom entitled to grave and dignified censure. Vanity, like quicksilver, remains perfectly inoffensive and inert until it comes in contact with substances of a nature to call forth its dormant powers. We have little to apprehend from the man who entertaining an extravagant idea of his talents, undervalues the capacities of others, and acts in opposition to the rest of the world—His vanity, pushed to excess, recoils on himself;—it even deprives him of that portion of esteem to which he may have an equitable claim, and he stands alone without credit, respect or influence, an object of contempt and ridicule. Men of this description, though they may disgust us, cannot injure us; they are at least harmless, and even their folly is entitled to forgiveness, in consideration of the mirth it affords us. But when the world mistakes or over-rates the talents of an individual (as it is sometimes apt to do) and enables him to obtain a situation in the state for which he has neither parts nor attainments, the evil may be of serious import: his vanity converted into arrogance, becomes at once mischievous

chievous and dangerous, and the country has every thing to apprehend from the rashness and pretensions of a man raised into credit and power by an indiscreet and premature confidence in his wisdom and integrity. If the validity of this distinction is admitted, and it is criminal in an individual "*to mistake or over-rate his abilities,*" the censure which the compilers of the Monthly Review have bestowed on the author of the Letter to the Duke of Grafton would have applied with much greater force and propriety to the person to whom that performance is addressed—for his Grace certainly *mislooked or over-rated* his capacity very much indeed when he assumed the direction of public affairs in 1766; nor can we reflect on the disasters that ensued, and on the blood that was wantonly shed during his presidency at the Treasury, without feeling the utmost indignation for the man, who presuming on his rank and connections, had the effrontery to cabal and intrigue for an office for which he must have known at the time that he was unqualified.

It is in such instances as these where the egotism of individuals merits reproach, and should be reprobated. When a man of this description, with all the blunders and mischiefs of his Administration fresh in remembrance,

comes forward, and presumes to controul Government ;—when, with the imbecillity of age added to all that petulance and poverty of intellect which marked the prime and vigor of his life, he attempts to embarrass the executive power in a moment like the present full of danger and of difficulty, and when a decided and perfect unanimity throughout the country can alone preserve the nation from ruin, I cannot admit that any epithets are too strong for a conduct so atrocious, or any censure too severe for an object so contemptible. I am accused of “ *endeavouring to acquire reputation from an attack on a character that had attracted the notice of Junius.*” Admitting the fact, the vanity must surely be of a very humble cast that contents itself with exposing the ridiculous ambition of decrepid age, grasping for power on the brink of the grave, without capacity to exercise it, or any reasonable motive for wishing it. The truth or falsehood however of this charge may be discovered in much the same manner as the common rules of arithmetic are proved ; and if those who advanced it had asked themselves, whether they believed that the letter in question would have been addressed to the Duke of Grafton, if his Grace had not come forward to thwart the measures of the Crown at a period the most awful and distressing of any recorded in history ?

tory? I do not think they would have hazarded the assertion. The question therefore for the consideration of the Reviewers was not whether I was urged by the hope of fame to attack an officious and sorry old man for his mischievous presumption, but whether his public conduct in the instance alluded to was reprehensible? If the answer should be in the affirmative, the asperity of my language is justified by the occasion; and those who are best acquainted with the history, temper, and capacity of the Duke of Grafton, will consider his hostile interference at this crisis, and at this period of his life, under all the disgraceful circumstances attending it, as an aggravation of his guilt, and of course acquit me of *mistaking or over-rating my talents*, for having held him out to public scorn.

It is however not improbable but the gentlemen who have upbraided me for a failing which I possess in common with the rest of mankind may be to the full as much entitled to the rebuke as myself.—It is possible that they may have very much *mistaken or over-rated THEIR talents* when they assumed the arduous and difficult task of sitting in judgment on the various publications which daily issue from the press on all subjects and almost in all languages; for to much general

neral and scientific knowledge, great erudition, great taste, and much good temper, united with a mind possessed of strong discriminating powers, should be added. These qualifications are indispensable for the office they have undertaken to perform, and without them a critic * would be as little deserving of attention as an author without attainments or ideas. To what extent the gentlemen in question possess these endowments may be collected from their criticisms; and judging of the former by the latter, it may possibly be thought that the reproach of self-sufficiency more properly belongs to the Monthly Reviewers than to the author of the letter addressed to the worthless descendant of the most worthless of the Stuarts; but whether the letter

* It has been assured to me since the above was written, that these *gentlemen* are not insensible to attentions which administer to their wants, and that a well-timed guinea has ensured to many a blockhead what indigent merit could never obtain. It is also said, that authors apprized of the venality, or distress of these Reviewers, send criticisms on their own works with the accustomed fee, and that sometimes malevolence comes to the market with her one pound one, and gives a sting to virtue and to truth. Having neither spleen to indulge, nor vanity to gratify, I cannot on my own knowledge vouch for the veracity of this accusation, which, whether true or false, appears at all events to have a much better foundation, and to have been urged with much less levity than that of an intention on my part to preach resurrections, which the Monthly Reviewers have so peremptorily advanced against me.

(which

(which has provoked so much ill-humour in these intelligent gentlemen) is well or ill written, can be of little import compared to the magnitude of the object to which it relates, or to the consequences attributed to the public conduct of the Duke of Grafton. If the inferences which the author has drawn from the proceedings of his Grace are fair or probable, and if his statement of facts is just, the coarse language from which he is condemned may prove indeed a want of education, but it by no means disqualifies him for discussing a subject to which he is competent in every other respect. If the line which the Duke of Grafton has taken is likely to encourage the seditious and disaffected in their designs against the Constitution, he merits the severity with which he has been treated, and it is by this alone that his adversary on the present occasion should be convicted or acquitted. It is fair to presume that every man who commits his thoughts to paper does it in the best manner he is able; and if my style is less elegant and correct than the compositions of those who criticise it, I do not think it is a sufficient reason for rejecting my arguments, or refusing to investigate the truth or falsehood of my allegations, and still less can it justify the construction which has been artfully put on several passages in my letter, unless indeed it was the
intention

intention of these gentlemen to turn the tables against me, by attributing those very designs to my writings which they profess to condemn, and which I have so severely censured in others. All misrepresentation has its source in malice or in ignorance, and in either case should be refuted. It is a deviation from the sober and correct line of truth, and whenever the intention is concerned, it is an offence against society and ought to be punished. The charge of having "*over-rated or mistaken my talents,*" is perhaps well founded, yet it has been urged with a degree of virulence and ill-humour not very decent or consistent in men who are advocates for mildness and decorum, and which it certainly behoved them to enforce by example at the moment they were recommending the practice of them to others. If any credit is due to the testimony of these gentlemen, it is not folly but crime with which they should have reproached me, for the man "*whose mind is made up to civil war*" in the sense which they would insinuate, and whose object is "*to shake the property of others,*" deserves something more than censure, and is infinitely more formidable and much more to be dreaded than "*Shakespeare's knight whose great forte lay in saying the coarsest things the coarsest way.*" The Monthly Reviewers assert that my menace to the Duke of Grafton is founded on "*a principle*"
 "that

“ *that would shake all the freehold and perhaps all
the funded property of the kingdom.*”

If these gentlemen were as expert in argument as they appear to be in abuse, they would have omitted the word *perhaps* as superfluous, for the freehold, by which I suppose they mean the landed property, is the only real and permanent security for the *funded* property, and it requires no extraordinary skill in finance to know that whatever destroys the former must inevitably annihilate the latter. Without dwelling however upon what would deserve little notice if it had not fallen from men who profess to be just, and in whom inaccuracy is a vice, I shall state by way of explanation, and merely as my opinion, that whatever tends to accuse the Minister of having wantonly plunged the country into war, has a direct tendency to excite a rebellion in the country. Whether the war is well or ill-conducted must be left for future consideration.—It is a question on which no man is at present competent to decide, nor should it come under discussion unless provoked by some very flagrant mismanagement, which involves in it the honor and safety of the kingdom.

If the war was unprovoked and unavoidable, as I trust I have demonstrated in a former

mer publication *, and which Mr. Dumourier has since acknowledged in his Memoirs †, the necessity of prosecuting it to an happy and speedy conclusion must be granted, and every measure of course condemned which has the most remote tendency to check the awakened ardor of the nation, or to impede the operations of Government; and as nothing is more likely to effect these purposes than to describe the country to be in a state of calamity and ruin from the war, and to place the war to the account of the Minister, I felt it a duty to come forward (for it is from conviction that I write, and not for hire) and contradict assertions which I knew to be false, and which, whatever may have been the motives of those who advanced them, were at least injudicious, if not criminal. If such language was indecent in men whose former conduct in office or in Parliament was undeserving of blame, how much

* Vide—The Conduct of France towards Great-Britain, with an Appendix and Notes, printed for J. Nicol, in Pall-Mall.

† The first cause of Dumourier's quarrel with the Convention was on account of their not immediately acceding to his proposal of invading Holland, by the taking of Maestricht in the Winter of 1792, and to which they only demurred, until matters were ripe for an insurrection at the Hague and at Amsterdam.

more reprehensible was it in a man whose whole administration was frivolous, disreputable, and atrocious, and who was himself a proper object of crimination?—Does it become the Duke of Grafton to talk of the rights of the people and of the dignity of Parliament, while we bear in painful remembrance, that during the period of almost four years the latter was degraded into a pensioned confederacy against the former?—Is it for the man to talk of the honor and prosperity of the country, who endangered its peace by violating the freedom of election, and who abandoned his Sovereign in the hour of alarm to the fury of a misguided populace? This is the delinquency with which his Grace stands charged; and if the circumstance of his disgraceful origin has been alluded to, it was not “*to reproach him with the libertinism of his great grandmother,*” but to humble that arrogance and insolence with which he is apt to treat men of superior pretensions in point of birth, talents, and character. An opposition from such a quarter can never be entitled to much credit I confess, but when it has a tendency to augment the seditious clamours of men whose object is to subvert all our civil and ecclesiastical establishments, it cannot be exposed too early or treated too severely. The times have a perilous aspect, not only to men whose minds are naturally gloomy,

but to those who, accustomed to reason and reflect, weigh well the circumstances of the moment, and look forward to probable events and contingencies.

It is become necessary to act with vigour at home as well as abroad. The times require great firmness, tempered with great discretion, or the reciprocal obligations of protection and allegiance will give way to distrust, fraud and violence, and finally end in an anarchy infinitely more terrible than the most confirmed and ferocious despotism.

The struggle in which we are engaged is momentous, and requires every exertion of which the resources and manly spirit of the nation are capable. It is not only a foreign war that we have to support, but a faction of a very formidable nature to subdue—a faction that disclaims the little interests of party or of an individual, and that boldly avows an intention to effect, by the application of an axe to all our establishments, an entire revolution in the minds and hearts of men; an universal change in our modes and habits of thinking and acting, to accomplish which the nation must become a scene of carnage and of blood! Under circumstances so alarming, we have no security against the sanguinary

guinary projects of our enemies but in OURSELVES.—It is our courage and our virtue that must preserve us from the ruin that assails us, and whoever opposes that unanimity, that spirit of concord, which can alone give effect to the exertions of Government, must either be influenced by mischievous motives, or be insensible of the dilemma to which the country is reduced. To those of the former description all arguments are vain—on minds so callous and corrupt the laws alone can operate; but on those of the latter description, or who may be stimulated to oppose Administration with a view to supplant them, it may not be amiss to try the expedients of admonition and remonstrance. I acquit the Duke of Grafton of any wish to see the Government dissolved; I feel assured of the contrary; but though he has no such view, his recent conduct in Parliament tends to encourage those who have such designs; and if the opinions which his Grace has lately advanced were to become general, and the people be convinced that this country is the aggressor in the war*,
the

* I have so often asserted that they could not avoid the war, and I have given such unquestionable evidence of the fact, that it is unnecessary to recur again to a subject on which it is impossible there should be two opinions among men of candor and information. As an additional proof
however

the clamours of the disaffected would augment, their numbers would multiply, and a revolution ensue perhaps to an extent equal to what we have

however of my veracity, the actual Government in France reprobates the war with England as violently as the gentlemen in opposition. The former however differ most essentially with the latter, by throwing on the people who were in power from the Autumn of 1792 to February 1793, the guilt and odium of the calamities which afflict the two nations:—the British Ministry are completely absolved from the charge of having provoked hostilities, while those who were connected with the Executive Council at the time above-mentioned, who were employed on mission in this country, are pursued with relentless fury as the **AUTHORS OF THE WAR**. The following extract from a letter, dated the twenty-second of last month, is this instant come to hand, and as my correspondent has effected his escape, and has no longer any thing to hope or to fear from his countrymen in France, I do not hazard his personal safety by availing myself of the latitude he gave me some time since to make any use I pleased of his letters.

I cannot however prevail upon myself to publish this extract without bearing testimony to his very zealous efforts to prevent the rupture, and to his repeated declarations to Le Brun that the Executive Council was imposed upon by its agents in this country, not only respecting the hostile views of the British Cabinet, but with regard to the temper and disposition of the nation at large, which was reported on the authority of Mr. Hardy, and some other vagabonds of that description, to be resolved on a revolution.

One of the people employed on mission by Le Brun had the indecency to boast to me in the presence of my correspondent, that

have seen on the continent, and which the coldest mind cannot contemplate without horror. Convinced as I am of this truth, it was certainly allowable

that in case of hostilities we should be deserted by the army and navy, whom France well knew how to seduce over to her interest. It was in consequence of this menace, and to counteract any such attempts, that I started the idea of a public subscription for the widows and orphans of those soldiers and seamen who should fall in the course of the present war: I had no doubt but a measure popular in itself from its humanity would be adopted, and I felt assured that it would operate as a check to the gentlemen on the other side of the channel. Another motive was, that while it demonstrated to the army and navy the well-merited attention of their fellow-subjects, it would tend to convince the enemy of the unanimity and loyalty of the nation. Impelled by these considerations, I requested Mr. Devaynes to call a public meeting, for the purpose of taking my proposal into consideration, and the amount of the subscriptions is a proof that I had not mistaken the character of my countrymen. I only mention this circumstance, as it enables me to do justice to my correspondent, who reprobated the perfidy of the proposed expedient, and on his leaving England, gave me the same advice as that with which the following letter concludes.

22 May, 1794.

“ VOUS avez certainement appris ce que s’est passé à
 “ mon égard. Des gens qui ne me connaissent pas, m’accusent
 “ D’AVOIR ETE L’AUTUER DE CETTE HORRI-
 “ BLE GUERRE entre nos deux pays ;—vous savez, mon
 “ cher Miles, ce qu’il en est, et combien j’ai fait d’efforts
 “ pour la prévenir.—Vainement, le veriez vous la voix en
 “ ma

allowable to remind his Grace, by way of admonition, of the title by which he holds a very considerable portion of his income, and which, functioned

“ ma faveur.—Votre témoignage ne ferait d’aucun poids.
 “ Je suis une nouvelle preuve que dans un tems de revolution
 “ la pureté des intentions & la droiture du cœur ne suffisent
 “ pour défendre un honette homme—au moment où je vous
 “ parle, peut-être suis-je proscrit dans ma patrie que j’ai
 “ trop bien servie. J’attens avec une grande resignation de
 “ fort mauvaises nouvelles, car je n’ai plus un seul ami à
 “ Paris.—Tout a péri—tout est mort ou dans les fers.—Je
 “ connais assez votre bon cœur pour être persuadé que vous
 “ repondrez promptement à cette lettre dont l’objet est inte-
 “ ressant pour me mettre en fureté & chercher quelque azile
 “ écarté où je doive ma subsistance au travail de mes mains
 “ —Adieu—Soyez plus heureux que moi; que les malheurs
 “ de la France servent de leçon aux personnes de tous les
 “ partis chez vous.”

TRANSLATION.

You have certainly been informed of what has happened to me.—I am accused by those who do not know me of BEING THE AUTHOR OF THE HORRIBLE WAR AGAINST YOUR COUNTRY.—You can speak to a certainty on the subject, and know how very much I exerted myself to prevent it—yet you would elevate your voice in vain in my favour—your evidence would be of no weight.—I am a fresh proof that in a moment of revolution, rectitude of intention and purity of heart are insufficient protections for an honest man.—At the instant I am writing to you, I am perhaps banished from my country, for having faithfully served it.—I shall wait the dire event with great resignation,
for

sanctioned as it may have been by prescription as well as by grants from the Crown and from Parliament, I maintain to have been in the first instance a scandalous abuse of power, and which from that very circumstance would most probably, in case of civil tumult, be the first to be investigated and cancelled.—To say that I recommend such a resumption is an impudent misrepresentation of my sentiments; nor is it very decent, or indeed very prudent in the Monthly Reviewers to compare a fraudulent appropriation of the public revenue in favour of the spurious issue of a worthless and lascivious Prince with the well-earned fruits of honest industry or of laudable ambition.

What cannot be vindicated should be passed over in silence; and if the Reviewers, who have lain aside the critic to plead the cause of despotism and dishonesty, really wish well to the

for I have not a single friend at Paris.—They have all perished!—They are either in the grave or in prison.—I am sufficiently acquainted with the goodness of your heart to know that you will return me an immediate answer to this letter, the object of which is interesting to my personal safety, and to enable me to seek an asylum in solitude, where I may owe my future subsistence to the sweat of my brow.—Adieu, and may you be happier than I am—May the misfortunes of France serve as a lesson to all parties in your country.

G

Duke

Duke of Grafton and to the other *illustrious* descendants from the same House, they will drop a subject which was mentioned with no other view than to state to his Grace the extreme danger he had to apprehend, if he withheld his support from Government at this awful crisis; when the disaffected of different descriptions consider every member of either House of Parliament that opposes the Crown, as a tower of strength to their party, and who regard every censure on the conflict in which we are engaged as an indirect approbation of the French system.

Having justified this part of my letter, I will quiet the minds of these critics by assuring them that it never was my intention to put either "*Charles the Second or his concubines on their trial,*" and that however much I may lament his having escaped out of life without receiving the punishment due to his perfidy and tyranny (for he had a *better* claim to the block than his father) I have no objection to his sleeping undisturbed until the trumpet calls him from his tomb to receive the punishment due to his crimes.—Neither should I have reminded his Grace of his disgraceful origin, if he had not proved by his insufferable insolence to a noble Lord *, (his

* Lord Thurlow.

superior in every respect) that he had himself forgotten it. Surely it ill became this "*accident of an accident*" to rail at the introduction of "*new men*" into the House of Peers, and to upbraid them with the obscurity of their birth. Of what *antiquity* is the family of his Grace, and what are the *merits* of *his* ancestors that he should dare to question the propriety of any man's advancement to the Peerage?—Peace to all his grandmothers—God bless them—let them sleep in quiet, I have no objections, but let their "*GREAT grand child*" so conduct himself as to induce us to *forget* the source to which we are indebted for much mischief and dishonor.—It is not in my nature to be unjust;—neither do I traffic in slander, and with a pen in one hand, and the other stretched out for alms, flatter or abuse those who pay or spurn me.—It is impossible that I can be lukewarm in a cause which involves in its issue the peace, comfort, and security of millions. The measured punctilios of a gentleman usher, or of a master of the ceremonies, but ill correspond with the bold and nervous diction of remonstrance—my language must be suited to the dignity and magnitude of my subject, and I cannot, in compliance with the effeminate refinement of the times, castrate truth of its manhood, and sacrifice the vigor of thought to sound.—If in the warmth of

my resentment I have had recourse to expressions that sound harsh or offensive to the polluted ears of upstart greatness, or of sycophants who spaniel at their heels, it is not the *severity* but the JUSTICE of these expressions that should be arraigned; and if on investigation they should appear to be well founded, the reproach is due to *those* who provoked and not to *him* who used them.

The blunt sincerity of truth needs no apology, and in a country governed by equal laws it has nothing to fear. It is not in England, thank Heaven, that the coronet and ermined robe afford impunity to crime; neither do they shield the blockhead or the knave from censure. The British Peerage, considered in the aggregate, is highly respectable—It is an assembly dignified by its virtues and its talents, as well as by the laws and constitution; and whether we behold it in its legislative or judicial capacity, it is entitled to our affection and reverence; but though these are due to the Peers collectively, it does not follow that individuals among them, who depart from the line of conduct which they ought to observe, and whose example is of importance to the lower orders of society, should find an exemption in the title of Grace or of Lordship from reproof; and in this assertion I

am supported by a gentleman in whose favour I certainly am not prejudiced, and whose opinion on this occasion cannot fail to justify that of mine in the minds of those who admire what they are pleased to call his *transcendant* abilities, and who consider him in whatever direction he moves as *infallible*. The language of Mr. Burke at the bar of the House of Lords on the 23d of last month is so exactly in point, that I have subjoined it in a note *, not in blame of the sentiments it contains, but in praise, for they are calculated to restore that energy to the mind and that purity to morals, which the pernicious refinements of the times have a tendency to weaken, corrupt, and destroy.

* It is the great misfortune of the present age, and nothing can more strongly prove its degeneracy, than that fine and emollient names are applied to bad actions—a woman convicted of adultery is called gallant;—the man who committed it is always in the *French*, and very often in the English language, called a man of *good fortune* *; but the Managers would never shew such a false, dangerous, and novel-like sympathy—when they were describing atrocious guilt, they would use adequate terms.

Extract from Mr. Burke's Speech at the trial of Mr. Hastings on Wednesday the 28th May.

* The French phrase is, *bonne aventure*.

If

If the Reviewers should admit the justice of Mr. Burke's positions (for it is not in every instance that I would quote this gentleman, or consider him as an authority) the severity of my language to the Duke of Grafton stands justified by the conduct that provoked it, and "*coarse things said even in the coarsest way*" are not to be condemned when addressed to men who deserve them; yet notwithstanding the extreme anger of the Critics, with the asperity of my language, and that part of my letter which attacks the principle of "*delapidating the public revenue for the purpose of providing for the spurious issue of Princes* *," they acknowledge that "*Parliament in providing for the public service may grant a revenue arising from lands, rent-charges, or duties on imported articles—the accumulated mass (they say) belongs to the public, and its destination is for PUBLIC USES.*" In imitation of the Monthly Re-

* Vide the note at page 12, to the Letter addressed to the Duke of Grafton, and which ought in strict justice, if quoted, to have been quoted at length; but these gentlemen, I suppose, are all masons, and work by line and rule. They appear to proportion, by a measurement of their own, the extracts they make, to the degree of censure they inflict, or of praise they bestow; lest a word too much or a word too little should contradict their decisions, and prove their want of candour. It would not be difficult, on this principle, to convict Moses of blasphemy.

viewers

viewers, I have only quoted sufficient for my purpose. The sentence however is complete, and I would have proceeded farther, if I could have comprehended the meaning of what immediately follows, but its obscurity or nonsense, as applied to the matter in dispute, baffled every effort, and I leave it to those who have more patience or curiosity than myself to penetrate through the mysterious jargon of these profound critics, politicians, and juris consults. I join issue however most cordially with these gentlemen, and acknowledge that Parliament, *in providing for the public service*, may grant any portion of the public revenue; and thus agreed, let me ask what *public service* Mrs. Palmer, or her son by Charles the Second, rendered to the State, that the one should have been created Duchess of Cleveland, and the other, with all his descendants, quartered in perpetuity on the public revenue? If the "*accumulated mass belongs to the public, and its destination is for public uses,*" (which no one will have the effrontery to deny) I am justified in saying that "*Charles the Second, in granting any portion of the public revenue to his illegitimate issue was guilty of a breach of trust to the nation, and that the Parliament that sanctioned the grant was an accomplice in the fraud.*" This I hold to be sound constitutional doctrine; it is a doctrine that I would have

have held at any period between the year 1660 and 1688, if it had been my misfortune to have lived in those wretched times; and the fair way of judging of its sterling weight and value is to ask whether the British nation, if it was still cursed with a Stuart on the Throne, would SUBMIT to so gross and impudent a violation of right and decency? I will take upon me to affirm, however "*self-sufficient*" the answer may be deemed, THAT IT WOULD NOT.— I feel assured that the manly spirits of the times would successfully oppose the application of any portion of the public revenue to a purpose so scandalous and iniquitous; and as the Reviewers tacitly acknowledge that the title under which the Duke of Grafton holds that part of his income which he derives from the customs to have been originally faulty, and that it has become valid by prescription, how incumbent then is it, not only in his Grace, but in the rest of the *sinister* offspring whom Charles the Second bequeathed to us as *legacies*, to be extremely circumspect in their conduct, and to avoid whatever may eventually shake or destroy the security which has legalized the fraud that enriched them; for what better chance has the statute of limitations of escaping in a general wreck than that of any other? In case of resumptions, it is reasonable to suppose that what

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was least merited, or that was illegally granted; will be the first sacrificed? I really do not mean to be personal, when I say that gentlemen deriving their maintenance from such a *source*, and holding their incomes by such a *tenor*, are more likely to be the first selected, and the first plundered in times of civil tumult, than any other description of people. Convinced as I am of this truth, it was surely pardonable to state to his Grace in the strongest language what he had to expect by discrediting Government at a moment when it required the greatest support, and when any diminution of its just power and influence might accelerate its destruction, and the dissolution perhaps of all our establishments.

I cannot hear with indifference the propagation of opinions, which the sudden and almost universal change that has taken place in the minds of the lower orders of society require to be corrected—suspended or suppressed.—Men acting under conviction are apt to be positive; and if they are sincere in the cause in which they have embarked, they are apt to be warm. I have seen enough of the different Governments on the continent to understand and to value the superiority of the one under which I have the felicity to live; and I have been a

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spectator

spectator of such melancholy changes and events, accompanied with such a series of horrible disasters, as to inspire me with the utmost aversion for those who would expose this happy country to the hazard of similar miseries. I do not speak at random, nor on doubtful authority, but from the facts within my own knowledge, when I assert that it has been the object of France for these four years past to seduce us to follow her example; and she had scarce conceived the project, when she boasted that it was accomplished. A residence at Paris in the years 1790 and 1791, and an intimacy with a variety of people in that metropolis, furnished me with abundant means of knowing not only their views with respect to this country, but the designs of those in England with whom they corresponded, and by whom they were taught to believe, "*that a revolution in England would be attempted and accomplished* *." That ardor and vivacity

* It is impossible to read the second Report of the private Committee to the House of Commons, without being convinced of a deliberate design to subvert the Constitution; and though the rank of the men who have entered into this conspiracy does not at first appear to warrant any apprehensions of danger from their efforts, yet their numbers, zeal, and industry, joined to the method and concert with which they have hitherto proceeded towards the accomplishment of their projects, make ample amends for their obscurity, and justifies

vacuity however which marks the French character, and renders every Frenchman impatient of controul, but ill corresponded with the caution

sies the alarm that has been given. The mischiefs to be dreaded from a legislature composed of the refuse of mankind—of men selected from Chick-lane, Hedge-lane, Billingsgate, and from the idle and dissolute in all our great manufacturing towns, set all estimate at defiance—they cannot be calculated, though an idea may be formed of the terrible consequences resulting from such a Government, by supposing this country to be precisely in the same predicament that France has been in since the tenth of August 1792.

The mind will then be able to make a comparison with tolerable accuracy between our present happy situation and that to which it would be exposed under the wild dominion of an ignorant, savage multitude, acting from the impulse of the moment, without any rule or principle of action, suspicious and jealous of each other's power, and waging relentless war not against tyranny or abuses, but against individuals, whose property, or whose virtues alone have rendered them objects of hatred and of vengeance.

I have already stated in a former publication *, that a King of England is the REPRESENTATIVE OF THE BRITISH NATION, to whom he is responsible through his Ministers for the faithful execution of the trust reposed in him. This is his true character; he cannot be recognized under any other; and considering him under this point of view, I am warranted by the first law authorities †, in declaring that any tumultuous assembling of the people, or insurrections to effect redress, or to accom-

* The Conduct of France towards Great-Britain, and also in the Letter addressed to the Duke of Grafton.

† Lord Ch. J. Hale and Foster.

tion and circumspection of those, who with every wish to go all possible lengths, moved as it were by rule, and measuring their steps by the forms

plish innovations of great public import, or for the purpose of defeating acts of Parliament, are guilty of HIGH TREASON; nor is it less treasonable by the statute in any British subject to adhere to the King's enemies; that is, with the subjects of those States which are at war with his Majesty.

To those who may not have gone to such lengths, or who may have meant nothing more than to obtain moderate reform, which in happier times may be urged and accomplished without risque or mischief, and to which some of the best and most able men in the country are well disposed, it may not be amiss to say that "*It is not for private subjects, misguided perhaps by ignorance, and heated by faction, to determine the proper moment of resistance against supposed violations of fundamental laws, subversive of the Constitution, and breaches of the original contract.*"

But as the following extracts from the second Report prove designs against the laws of a most atrocious nature, and an avowed intention to destroy the Constitution and Government, they cannot have too great a degree of publicity; it is necessary that the nation should be fully informed of the danger with which it is menaced, that it may come forward, and resist the premeditated crimes of men become formidable from their numbers, their exertions, and the extent of their guilty designs.

" 6th. It is the opinion of this meeting that the people ought to demand as a right, and not petition as a favour for universal representation.

" 3d. That therefore we will petition the House of Commons no more on this subject."

24 April, 1794, Bristol Meeting.

" When

forms of law, declined hazarding their necks, and the success of their plans by a precipitancy which would expose the actors to punishment, and marr their designs for ever. Paris, at the periods to which I allude, had a number of emissaries from this country ; some on the part of Opposition, for no other purpose than to discredit the measures of Government *, and facilitate a change in his Majesty's Councils ; others with views far more extensive and infinitely more pernicious, for they went to **THE ABOLITION OF THE PEERAGE, AND THE EXTINCTION OF THE MOST IMPORTANT AND MOST SALUTARY PREROGATIVES OF THE CROWN.** The

“ When a revolution of sentiment shall have dispersed the
 “ mists of prejudice, when by the incessant thunderings from
 “ the press the meanest cottagers of our country shall be enlightened, and the sun of reason shall shine in its fullest
 “ meridian over us, than the commanding voice of the
 “ whole people shall recommend the 558 gentlemen in St.
 “ Stephen's Chapel to go about their business.”

* I could relate a laughable anecdote, communicated to me by the elder Mirabeau, to whom one of these gentlemen, without having any previous acquaintance or knowledge of his person or letters, introduced himself, and having done it, invited Mr. Mirabeau to dinner in a manner as abrupt as the acquaintance had been made. Mirabeau addressed himself to me, to know who this gentleman was, and what his business with him could be—The adventure lost nothing in the relation, and it added considerably to the natural vanity of the Frenchman, who instantly fancied himself courted by Opposition, and dreaded by Ministry.

views

views of these latter kept pace with the licentiousness of the country whose example they admired, and their hopes of success arose in proportion as the French advanced to infamy and ruin.

Every disaster that attended the British arms was matter of indecent triumph, and a presage of success to their projected plans of hostility against the independence and internal tranquillity of the people. Nor were the people who had entered into these views displeased to see the whole force and resources of the kingdom called forth, while a prospect existed of rendering them abortive. They were sensible that in proportion as the extraordinary efforts of the moment were unsuccessful, the country would become weak, and incapable of resisting the premeditated attack. This combination was as simple as it was atrocious; and in order to accomplish their object, all that ingenuity and perfidy could devise, or that great industry aided by great boldness could execute, were attempted, while looking forward in confidence and security to the period that was to place the Minister between two fires—that is, between insurrections at home and an invasion from abroad; the legislative and executive branches of Government were openly menaced in the public correspondence of all the embryo conventions

ventions which had taken root in the kingdom since the year 1789, and whose contagion was extending itself throughout the empire with a rapidity equal to its malignity. My situation furnished me with opportunities to see and to hear much of these transactions*; my leisure enabled me to mark their progress.

The obligations of patriotism are not in my estimation slight or simple duties, of little import whether they are executed or neglected, but of wide and general extent; they involve in them

* Two of the leading men, but of opposite views and interests, in the revolution in 1789, repeatedly assured me in the Summer of 1790, that a revolution in England was unavoidable; that the enlightened wisdom of France had demonstrated the folly and danger of having two Houses of Parliament, and the still greater mischief of allowing the King to possess the right of making peace and war. That the people of England, animated by the example of Ireland, whose volunteers would soon be assembled in the cause of freedom, would take the National Assembly for its model, and by adopting its maxims and its laws, lay the foundation of an eternal alliance between the two empires. Such was the language which the principal men in the two great factions at Paris held, even at that early period of the revolution, and such the doctrines they authorized the emissaries of all nations, whom they had in England, Scotland, and Ireland, to maintain and promulgate. To these objects their correspondence from London and Dublin uniformly tended; extracts of which were occasionally read to me for the purpose of undeceiving me with respect to the sentiments and dispositions

them a variety of solemn and important considerations; they include all the relative duties of mankind in their progress from infancy to age, and in all the different characters, changes and gradations, to which they are liable while living in a state of social intercourse with each other. Acting under this impression, and influenced by what I feel a virtue, I opposed, with all that vehemence which marks the character of a man ardent in his pursuits, and passionately attached to his country, the clandestine as well as the avowed designs of those who meant to render it a scene of confusion and of blood.

I am no stranger to the importance which bad men at this time annex to the opposition which is given to the Minister. However insignificant or contemptible the individual may be in public

sitions of my countrymen. From hence it is evident that the project for subverting of the British Constitution was adopted almost as soon as the King of France was dragged in disgraceful triumph from Versailles to Paris; and I know that it has been pursued on the part of the French with that subtlety and that ardor which appertain to the finess and vivacity of the French nation. Whenever I asserted that we were perfectly satisfied with the present Government, I was laughed at for my ignorance; and whenever I contended that there was neither a necessity nor an excuse for a revolution in England; my arguments were opposed by a torrent of propositions, which however just in the abstract, are incompatible in practice with the general interests and safety of society.

I am

or in private life, his conduct in Parliament atones for his want of talents, his infamy or inconsistency, while the blockhead, charmed at finding himself changed from a cypher to an unit, swallows the fulsome panegyric with avidity, and a dupe to the vermin whose object is to render him the instrument of their villainy, he fancies himself the Atlas of the State. We smile at the delusion of the infant who in its innocent simplicity mistakes the finger for the nipple, and beguiles itself to sleep; but the adult who, in a situation that implies knowledge and vigor of intellect, adopts errors too gross to deceive even childhood, has no excuse, for there is no medium between vice and folly; his conduct is the result of guilt or imbecility, and in either case he is unworthy of the trust reposed in him, and deserves the indignation or contempt he meets with. There are two points on which I am much surprized that any difference of opinion should exist. The first of these is, that France began to meditate the subversion of the British Government the very instant almost that she had destroyed the Bastile, and that she was encouraged to proceed in her criminal designs by several people in different parts of the British dominions.

The second is, that it was not in the power of Administration to avoid the perilous contest in which we are engaged; and what places this

fact in the strongest point of view possible, is the extreme animosity with which the Convention pursue all those who were in office towards the close of the year 1792 and the commencement of 1793, on the express charge of being "*the authors of the terrible war that has broken out between the two nations* *."

This evidence therefore of guilt in the French Executive Council establishes the innocence of the British Cabinet. It is a virtual acquittal of the English Minister, while the severity with which the people actually in power at Paris condemn the war, and punish its authors, prove that the measure was not of their seeking, and that they lament it was ever adopted. A personal knowledge of Robespierre authorises me to assert, that he has been uniform and consistent through the whole history of this lamentable revolution, and that, uninfluenced by personal interest, he has steadily pursued the idea which he adopted at a very early period, of establishing a republic on the ruins of monarchy. A simplicity in his dress was accompanied by an austerity of manners that corresponded with the objects he had in view, and known to be incorruptible, (for the annual revenue of Great Britain could not seduce him from his purpose) he

* Vide the note and letter from the continent dated the 22d of last month, inserted in page 47.

acquired a degree of popularity which has hitherto enabled him to pursue his projects, and to triumph not only over those who opposed them, but over those of whose fidelity he was not well assured*. It is in these instances by which the spirit of faction seems to be suppressed, and that the authority, or usurpation of Robespierre, or whatever else it may be called, appears to have acquired one of the principal characteristics of an established Government; and whatever may be the result of his triumphs, whether he retains or loses the power he has acquired, I will hazard a conjecture, however "*self-sufficient*" it may be thought by the Monthly Reviewers or their *proxy*, that though Robespierre may fall by an assassin, he will never be brought to the guillotine.

If the war was unavoidable on the part of this country, as I trust has been made evident in my different publications, (and which Dumourier in his Memoirs, and the Convention by their recent prosecutions have fully confirmed)

* It is in the recollection of several gentlemen, that I said at the time when Danton, by the commotion previous to that which brought him to the scaffold, was raised to an equality of power in appearance with Robespierre, that he had no other security for his life than to cling to the mantle of the latter; and that if he attempted to play his colleague foul, he was a lost man. The event has proved that I did not speak at random.

the necessity of supporting the Minister in the prosecution of it to an honourable conclusion must be admitted, and every measure condemned which has the most remote tendency to check the awakened ardor of the nation, or to impede the operations of Government; and as these latter purposes are likely to be effected by placing the war to the account of the Minister, I felt it a duty to come forward and contradict assertions which I knew to be false, and which, whatever may have been the motives of those who advanced them, were at least injudicious, if not criminal. I have therefore confined myself to the topics on which opposition appear to rest their claim to credit. My knowledge enables me to speak with certainty and precision to this fact; for if the war should, unhappily, prove disastrous in the event, it is of consequence to the nation, that the Minister, who has hitherto had every claim to its confidence and esteem, should be vindicated from the slander of having wantonly plunged his country into a calamity of such direful extent.



F I N I S.